

**Briefing Paper—November 2011
Big Horn County
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Update**

What is a pre-disaster mitigation plan (PDM)?

A PDM plan looks at natural hazards that the county, Hardin, and Lodge Grass may be susceptible to and ways to lessen the potential disasters caused by those hazards. The county's existing plan, approved in 2006, is being updated to make sure the county, Hardin and Lodge Grass remain disaster-resistant and less vulnerable to property damage and loss of life from a natural disaster. To remain current, the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) require that the plan be updated every five years. By successfully revising the plan, the county will continue to be eligible to compete for project funds. The county will also be eligible for post-disaster assistance from the state and/or FEMA, in the event of a major disaster. Adoption of the plan is voluntary, but each jurisdiction--the county and the two communities--will need to have at least one mitigation project in the plan and adopt the plan if they wish to qualify for funding and assistance.

What is in the plan?

The plan will contain profiles of natural hazards such as flooding or wildfires, vulnerability to each hazard, and a history of past disasters. Potential losses from future disasters will be estimated. Accomplishments since the original plan was adopted will be listed, and goals and projects identified by citizens and local governments will be prioritized and added as appropriate. The plan will also have an explanation of how it was developed, a review of other related plans, and copies of news articles and notes from meetings held to discuss the plan.

How will the plan be revised?

Using FEMA funds passed through the state, the county has contracted for the plan update with Barb Beck, of Beck Consulting located in Red Lodge. Working with Big Horn County Disaster and Emergency Services, the county, and the two incorporated communities over the next eight months, Ms. Beck and subcontractors AMEC, Inc. and Map Murals will review other local plans for consistency, update the hazard profiles, and work with elected officials and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to gather input and develop any needed additional goals and projects. A draft plan will be made available for public review in the spring and comments received will be incorporated. The county will submit the plan to the state and FEMA for technical review. Finally, Hardin, Lodge Grass, and Big Horn County will have the opportunity to adopt and then implement the plan.

How do we offer input?

Input is encouraged any time until adoption by the governing bodies targeted for late spring of 2012. Input from the public and knowledgeable individuals will help make the plan the highest quality possible. Public meetings will be designed to offer opportunity for input and all meetings will be noticed and open to the public. The Big Horn County News and Original Briefs will be provided with the meeting information and periodic updates. Questions or comments can be submitted by phone, in writing, or by e-mail to Ed Auker, Big Horn County Disaster and Emergency Services, 665-1731, eauger@co.bighorn.mt.us, or Barb Beck at 406 446-3628, barbbeck@bresnan.net, P.O. Box 870 Red Lodge, MT. 59068. Visit the county's website at www.bighorn.mt.gov for current information on the planning process.